

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am **Upendra Yettela**. I live in 6623 Sasparilla Dr, **Simi Valley, CA 93063**. I am proud Hindu American. My daughter goes to middle school in **Simi Valley School Dist**. I am thankful to you for taking time in reading my letter. I come to know that CDE is in the process of revising the textbooks and some references to Hinduism and India are being removed. This is concerning to me as Indian origin and Hindu American as it impacts my daughter interacting with her friends in the school and also rest of the society outside.

First point is that replacing the name India by South Asia is unjust and destroys the identity of a large number of children from India.

Especially current suggestion of replacing India by “South Asia” is unnecessary and causes confusion and steals identity from children who are from India. Moreover, all the historical figures starting from Columbus (even prior), Vasco DaGama , Einstein etc have referred to this landmass as India. India did not come into existence in 1947 and has existed and been referred by this name for long..

For example, when British established British East India Company they referred to the entire landmass from Afghanistan to Myanmar, Tibet to Sri Lanka as India and not South Asia.

Given these facts, **I urge you use India in the textbooks at all places instead of South Asia** since that is what is used in the historical documents

In addition to the above, below are my specific comments regarding some of the changes proposed in the text books.

EDIT 2536:"Page 215, lines 891-892:

Current text: “Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief.”

Suggested change: “Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure as well as a religious belief.””

My comment:

This change introduces bias with respect to Hinduism since similar practices which were part of other religions traditions and their textbooks are not mentioned. For example, there are references to slavery in bible , unequal treatment of women in Islam are not mentioned in the same text books. This kind of topics don't belong in middle school/high school textbooks and are best left to mature college courses.

This kind of discriminatory treatment might lead to concerned parent seeking judicial intervention and thus impact the timeline of revision of textbooks. **I request that the suggested change be dropped and keep the current text.**

EDIT 2545:"Page 215, lines 896-897:

Current text: "They participated equally with their husbands in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations."

Suggested change: "They participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations, though not as equals."

My comment:

This change is specifically introducing bias against Hinduism in text book for school children. This may also be discriminatory if the treatment of women in other world religions (women can't become priests in churches or women cannot pray with men in mosques etc). It is my experience that there are certain rituals where women take the lead and others men take the lead role in Hinduism. There are certain activities it is forbidden for a man to do unless wife is part of the ritual. Certainly it is complicated and does not capture the situation very well. **I request you to reject the change**

EDIT 2552:"Page 215, lines 912-914:

Current text: "Through the story of his life, his Hindu background, and his search for enlightenment, students may learn about his fundamental ideas: suffering, compassion, and mindfulness."

Suggested change: "Through the story of his life, and his search for enlightenment, students may learn about his fundamental ideas: suffering, compassion, and mindfulness."

My comment:

I presume this text is about learning about Gautam Budhdha. It is real irony if the Hindu background of Gautama Buddha is not mentioned. It is a historical fact that Buddhism is considered one of the darshanas (philosophy is closest English word used) and Buddha is considered as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu in Hinduism. Delinking Hindu background of Buddha for student learning about Buddhism is giving a biased view to someone learning about world religions. **This change should be rejected**

As you can see from few examples provided before these references above will connect my daughter and any Hindu kid to their roots. Connecting to my daughter's roots is very important part of her identity which will make them responsible citizens in a multi-cultural society like America. Without the correct knowledge of her religion and culture she will not be able to relate to what she studies and what we practice at home as Hindus. We sincerely request you to not change the references.

Thanks again for your time.

Best regards,

Upendra Yettela &
Sreelatha Manchala